(b) The average time taken to issue a fresh passport is 6-7 weeks and two weeks for renewal of passport.

(c) One of the major steps taken to help people outside Bangalore to get passports is the Decentralisation Scheme under which passport applications are received at district level in District Passport Cells (DPCs) in all districts of Karnataka other than Bangalore with effect from 2 November, 2003. In addition, passport applications are also received at 28 Speed Post Centres in Karnataka. Further two Passport Application Collection centres are functioning at Gulbarga and Mangalore. Passport Camps and Adalats were conducted at various District Headquarters during the period to expedite the issuance of passports to people outside Bangalore.

Splitting of IOC

*143. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to consider splitting of Indian Oil Corporation and selling its marketing arm; and

(b) if so, the reason therefore in view of (i) Government's earlier decision of keeping IOC as a flagship company under Public Sector, and (ii) unviability of stand-alone refineries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) and (b) Government has before it different options to address the situation arising out of the judgment of the Supreme Court dated 16.9.2003 regarding HPCL and BPCL disinvestment.

Second phase of the NHDP

*150. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved the second phase of the

Prime Minister's National Highway Development Project comprising of 7,300 km. of north-south and east-west corridors;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for delay in finalising this project;

(c) the amount involved in completing this second phase of the project; and

(d) by when it is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) Government have, in principle, approved the 4/6 laning of all sections of the National Highways Development Project (NHDP) in April, 2000. Subsequently, Government have approved implementation of Phase I of NHDP (Golden Quadrilateral and a part of the East-West and North-South Corridors) in December, 2000. Government have also approved implementation of a part of Phase-II of NHDP covering 507 km. of the East-West Corridor in June 2003. Implementation of the balance length of Phase-II of NHDP covering 5744 km. has been recommended by the Public Investment Board and is under active consideration of the Government.

(b) There is no delay.

(c) The estimated cost of implementation of Phase-II of NHDP is Rs. 31,808 crore excluding interest on loans during construction period.

(d) The preparation of Detailed Project Report has already started and the project is scheduled for completion by December, 2007.

Foodgrain stock in FCI

*152. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of total foodgrain stocks in the FCI godowns during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the details of total offtake of foodgrains during the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether foodgrains were released to exporters at a subsidised rate;